



# **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

**Equality of Opportunity Policy  
September 2015**

## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Equality of Opportunity

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Jesus said "Love one another as I have loved you."

These words are the heart of our school family.

Within our Catholic community, where prayer, liturgy and reflection are valued as part of daily life, the Christian values of friendship, compassion and forgiveness are shared.

Together we are proud of our own faith and beliefs whilst remaining respectful of others.

We celebrate achievement in all aspects of school and home life - everyone is unique and a child of God.

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. These include:

- Pupils
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Parents
- Governors
- Visitors to the school
- Students on placement.

Equal opportunities should permeate all aspects of school life, and is the responsibility of every member of the school community.

This policy statement reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole school community. It has been drawn up as a result of discussion within a working party made up of representatives of teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, governors and pupil representatives.

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all individuals within the school community. The responsibility for keeping the issue of equal opportunity at a high level of priority at all times and in all areas, is that of the equal opportunity co-ordinator who is the Headteacher.

All members of the school community should be aware that every individual has a right to be considered of equal value and be given equal opportunities regardless of:

- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Social background
- Ability/Disability
- HIV/AIDS
- Belief
- Age
- Marital status
- Nationality/Citizenship
- Sexual orientation.

In the context of the school we feel the most appropriate definition is that:

Equal opportunity is the right of everyone to equal chances,  
and each individual is respected for who they are.

#### Ethos and Atmosphere

- At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community.
- There should be an 'openness' of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school.
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect.
- The displays around the school are of high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity.
- Although physical access to the school is difficult under normal circumstances vehicular access to a school door can be easily arranged for disabled visitors.
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of both assemblies and classroom activities.

#### Learning Environment

- There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or social background. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.
- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all pupils.
- The adults in the school try to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- The school places a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs. We aim to meet all pupils' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work (see SEN policy).

- The school provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources.
- All pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.

### **The taught curriculum**

- At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School we aim to ensure that our planning reflects our specific commitment to equality of opportunity in all subject areas and cross curricular themes in line with the National Curriculum 2000.
- Our planning takes account of the differing needs of pupils and their progression.
- We have a commitment to evaluate our curricular outcomes each term to ensure that what we have actually planned takes place. These evaluations are completed by the Headteacher.
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### **Resources and Materials**

The provision of good quality resources and materials within St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is a high priority. These resources should:

reflect "the reality of an ethnically and culturally diverse society"

reflect a variety of viewpoints

show positive images of males and females in society including disabled people

reflect non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context

include materials to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues

be equally accessible to all members of school community consistent with health and safety

not include explicitly and implicitly racist or sexist materials.

## **Language**

We recognise that it is important at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School that all members of the school community use appropriate language which:

does not transmit or confirm stereotypes

does not offend

creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document

creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem

uses correct terminology in referring to particular groups or individuals eg Native Americans rather than Red Indians.

## **Organisation of Learning**

When organising groups for various activities, consideration is always given to the composition of the group, to provide a balance appropriate to the activity.

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School we try to make our environment culturally diverse, and we are very conscious of the need to provide first hand experiences for the pupils to encounter people from other cultures. We do this by studying other religions and cultures through the 'Here I Am' programme and by making the children aware of the world around them when planning topic work around a theme.

## **Extra-curricular provision**

It is the policy of this school to provide equal access to all activities from an early age eg girls playing football, boys playing netball and mixed teams wherever possible.

We undertake responsibility for making contributors to extra-curricular activities aware of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity (eg sports helpers, coach drivers) by providing them with written guidelines drawn from this policy.

We try to ensure that all such non staff members who have contact with children adhere to these guidelines.

### **Provision for Bilingual pupils**

We undertake at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School to make appropriate provision for all bilingual groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:

- Traveller children
- those from refugee families
- pupils whose home language is not a standard form of English
- pupils for whom English is an additional language.

While there is a need for pupils to learn to communicate in standard English we believe that their home language should be celebrated and respected.

### **Staffing and Staff Development**

We are bound by the legal requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff. This must include pupils access to a balance of male and female staff at both key stages

We undertake to encourage the career development and aspirations of all individuals.

It is our policy to provide staff with training and development which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils in the various dimensions of equality of opportunity.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

It is the duty of this school to challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour eg

- unwanted attentions (verbal or physical)

unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions about another person's appearance or character.

The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with incidents such as these (see Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy)

### **Parents and the Wider Community**

We aim to work in partnership with parents to help all pupils to achieve their potential

We wish to affirm our continuing commitment to reach out to other cultural groups within our immediate community and beyond.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Equality of opportunity is identified as an area requiring careful and ongoing monitoring in the School Development Plan.

The person on the staff responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the policy is St. Mary's Catholic Primary School. S/he will be responsible for:

- Leading discussions in designated staff meetings which will include support staff, to discuss issues of equal opportunities within the school community.
- Working closely with the Governor responsible for this area who is
- Monitoring the following will enable the school to see where equality of opportunity needs to be more intensely focused:

SATs results

participation in extra-curricular activities

exclusions and persistent absence

continuous assessment of children's learning

racist and sexist incidents

results from screening for specific learning needs

attendance.